

## Earning Your License

Safe riding requires a combination of knowledge and skill. Objectively assessing your own riding skills and knowledge is difficult at best, and it's even harder for friends and relatives to be totally honest about your riding skills. Taking a motorcycle knowledge test is the best way to determine if you have the minimum knowledge necessary to operate a motorcycle safely in traffic.

Knowledge test questions are based on information, practices, and concepts found in this manual. In order to pass the test, you must know and understand road rules and safe riding practices. On-cycle skills tests are conducted in a controlled, off-street area.

Any person who applies for a motorcycle endorsement after September 1, 1998, will be required to pass both a written knowledge test and motorcycle skills test\*. Any person under 21 will be required to take a written knowledge test and successfully complete a motorcycle rider training course (see page 42 of this manual). It is a good idea to take this course even if you are over 21.

**For the beginning or experienced rider course nearest you, call the [Idaho STAR](#) toll free at (888) 280-STAR (7827) or the Idaho Department of Education at (208) 332-6852.**

\*Successful completion of an approved motorcycle rider training course may waive the requirement for the riding skills test, if completed within the year prior to adding the endorsement to your license.

A motorcycle instruction permit is available to anyone who holds a valid Idaho Class A, B, C, or D license. This permit is valid for 180 days and allows motorcycle operators to practice riding under the following restrictions.

- Daylight riding only
- No freeway riding
- No passengers

You must pass the written motorcycle knowledge test before applying for an instruction permit. If you add the motorcycle endorsement to your Idaho driver's license during the instruction permit period, the one-time motorcycle endorsement fee will be waived. Once the instruction permit has expired, you must pay the endorsement fee.

You will have to pay one or more of the following fees in addition to the cost of your regular license:

<b>Motorcycle "M" Endorsement:</b>	\$11.50 (one-time fee)
<b>Motorcycle Instruction Permit:</b>	\$11.50 (valid for 180 days)

<b>Motorcycle Skills Test:</b>	\$5.00 (paid to skills tester)
<b>Motorcycle Written Test:</b>	\$3.00 (paid to county)

If you fail a written and/or skills test, you must wait three days to retest and pay the fee again.

## Preparing To Ride

What you do before you start a trip goes a long way toward determining whether or not you'll get where you want to go safely. Before taking off on any trip, a safe rider makes a point to:

- wear the right gear.
- check the motorcycle equipment.
- become familiar with the motorcycle.

### **RIDING GEAR**

When you ride, your gear is "right" if it protects you. In any collision, you have a far better chance of avoiding serious injury if you wear:

- an approved helmet.
- face or eye protection.
- protective clothing.

#### **Helmet Use**

Collisions are not rare events — particularly among beginning riders. And one out of every five motorcycle collisions result in head or neck injuries. Head injuries are just as severe as neck injuries. Accident analysis show that head and neck injuries account for a majority of serious and fatal injuries to motorcyclists. Idaho law requires all persons under the age of 18 to wear a DOT-approved protective helmet while riding on or operating a motorcycle.

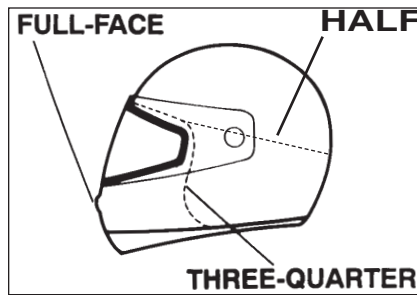
Some riders don't wear helmets because they think helmets will limit their view to the sides. Others wear helmets only on long trips or when riding at high speeds. Consider the following:

- A DOT-approved helmet lets you see as far to the sides as necessary. A study of more than 900 motorcycle collisions, where 40% of the riders wore helmets, did not find even one case in which a helmet kept a rider from spotting danger.
- Most collisions happen on short trips (less than five miles long), just a few minutes after starting out.
- Most riders are riding slower than 30 mph when a collision occurs. At these speeds, helmets can cut both the number and the severity of head injuries by half.

### Helmet Selection

There are three primary types of helmets, providing three different levels of coverage: half, three-quarter, and full face.

Whichever style you choose, you can get the most protection by making sure that the helmet:



- Meets U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and state standards. Helmets with labels from the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or the Snell Memorial Foundation give you an added assurance of quality.
- Fits snugly, all the way around.
- Has no obvious defects such as cracks, loose padding, or frayed straps.

Whatever helmet you decide on, keep it securely fastened on your head when you ride. Otherwise, if you are involved in a collision, it's likely to fly off your head before it gets a chance to protect you.

### Eye and Face Protection

A faceshield can help protect your face from wind, dust, dirt, rain, insects, and pebbles thrown up from vehicles ahead. These problems can be distracting and painful. If you have to deal with them, you can't devote your full attention to your safety and the road. Wearing a faceshield may help prevent a collision.

Goggles protect your eyes, though they won't protect the rest of your face like a faceshield does. A windshield is not a substitute for a faceshield or goggles. Most windshields will not protect your eyes from the wind. Neither will eyeglasses or sunglasses. Glasses won't keep your eyes from watering, and they may blow off when you turn your head while riding.

To be effective, eye or faceshield protection must:

- Be free of scratches.
- Be made of shatter-proof material.
- Give a clear view to either side.
- Fasten securely, so it does not blow off.
- Permit air to pass through, to reduce fogging.
- Permit enough room for eyeglasses or sunglasses, if needed.

Tinted eye protection should not be worn at night or any other time when little light is available.

## **Clothing**

The right clothing protects you in a crash.

Jacket and pants should cover your arms and legs completely. They should fit snugly enough to keep from flapping in the wind, yet loosely enough to move freely. Leather offers the most protection, but heavy denim usually does an adequate job at a reasonable price. Sturdy synthetic material provides a lot of protection as well. Wear a jacket even in warm weather. Many are designed to protect without getting you overheated, even on summer days.

Boots or shoes should be high and sturdy enough to cover your ankles and give them support. Soles should be made of hard, durable material. Choose boots or shoes with short heels so they do not catch on rough surfaces. Tuck laces in so they won't catch on your motorcycle.

Gloves allow a better grip and help protect your hands in a crash. Your gloves should be made of leather.

In cold or wet weather, your clothes should keep you warm and dry, as well as protect you from injury. You cannot control a motorcycle well if you are numb from the cold. Riding for long periods in cold weather can cause severe chill and fatigue. A winter jacket should resist wind and fit snugly at the neck, wrists, and waist. Good-quality rainsuits designed for motorcycle riding resist tearing apart or ballooning up at high speeds.

*Answers to sample questions are located on page 41.*

**1. Plastic face shields and goggles must:**

- A. Be free of scratches and provide a clear view of either side.**
- B. Be made of shatter-proof material.**
- C. Not be worn at night if tinted.**
- D. All of the above.**

## **KNOW YOUR MOTORCYCLE**

There are plenty of things on the highway that can cause you trouble. Your motorcycle should not be one of them. To make sure that your motorcycle won't let you down:

- Start with the right motorcycle for you.
- Be familiar with the motorcycle controls.
- Check the motorcycle before every ride.
- Keep it in safe riding condition between rides.
- Avoid add-ons and modifications that make your cycle harder to handle.

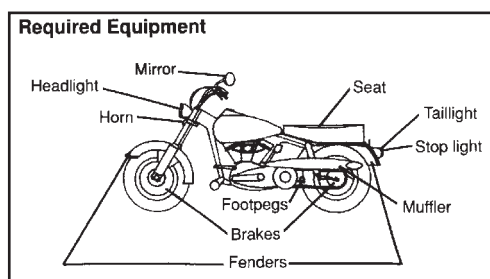
### **The Right Motorcycle For You**

First, make sure your motorcycle is right for you. It should “fit” you. Your feet should reach the ground while you are seated on the cycle.

### **Required Equipment**

Idaho law requires all motorcycles operated on Idaho roads to have the following:

- **Brakes:** The law requires a brake on at least one wheel. It can be operated by hand or by foot.
- **Fenders:** All motorcycles must have fenders on both wheels that extend in full width from a point just forward of the center of the tire to a point not more than 20” above the surface of the highway.
- **Passenger Seat and Footrests:** Motorcyclists are prohibited from carrying passengers unless a permanently attached seat and footrests are provided for the passenger. Passenger footrests must be designed exclusively for use by the passenger.
- **Headlight:** Motorcycles must have a headlight sufficient to reveal a person or vehicle not less than 100 feet ahead when traveling 25 mph or less; not less than 200 feet when traveling 25-35 mph; and not less than 300 feet when traveling more than 35 mph.
- **Helmet:** Any person under the age of 18 must wear a protective helmet while operating or riding on a motorcycle.
- **Horn:** You must have a horn that can be heard up to 200 feet away.



- **Insurance:** You must have (and carry on your person) liability insurance in an amount of not less than \$25,000.
- **Mirror:** Motorcycles must have a mirror that provides a view of the highway for at least 200 feet to the rear.
- **Muffler:** You must have a muffler that does not increase engine noise to a level above that of the muffler originally installed by the motorcycle manufacturer.
- **Stop Light:** A red stop light that comes on when you work the brakes must be visible for 100 feet to the rear during normal sunlight.
- **Taillight:** Motorcycles must have one red taillight visible for 500 feet to the rear.

### **Borrowing and Lending**

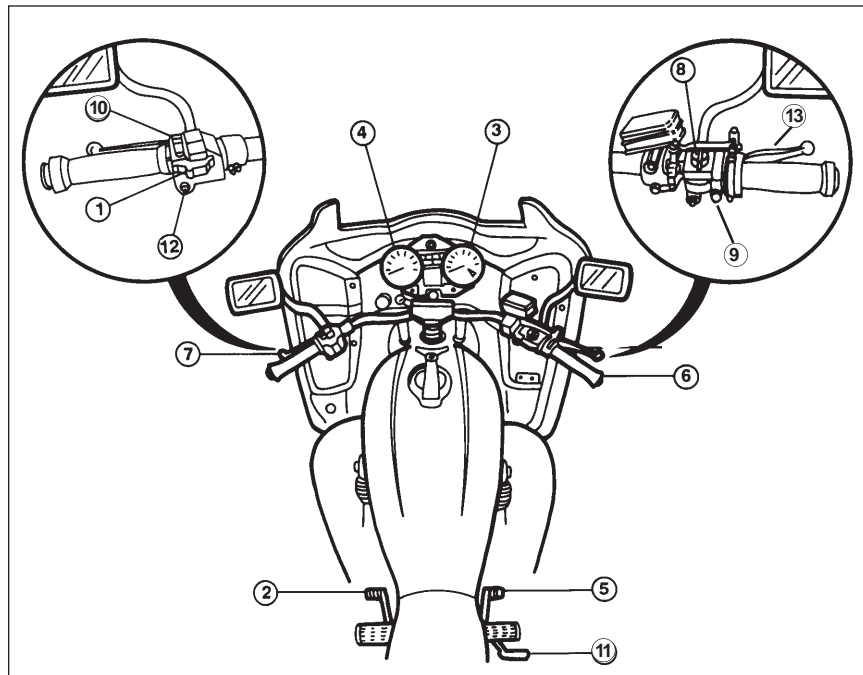
Borrowers and lenders of motorcycles, beware. Collisions are fairly common among beginning riders — especially in the first months of riding. Riding an unfamiliar cycle adds to the problem. If you borrow a motorcycle, get familiar with it in a controlled area and make sure it is insured—you are liable. If you lend your motorcycle to friends, make sure they are licensed and know how to ride before allowing them out into traffic.

No matter how experienced you may be, ride extra carefully on any bike that's new or unfamiliar to you. More than half of all collisions occur on motorcycles that have been ridden by the operator for less than six months.

### **Get Familiar with the Motorcycle Controls**

Make sure you are completely familiar with the motorcycle before you take it out on the street. This is particularly important if you are riding a borrowed cycle. If you are going to use an unfamiliar motorcycle:

- Make all the checks you would on your own motorcycle.
- Find out where everything is, particularly the turn signals, horn, headlight switch, fuel-control valve, and engine cut-off switch. Learn to operate these items without having to look for them.
- Know the gear pattern. Work the throttle, clutch, and brakes a few times before you start riding. All controls react a little differently.
- Ride very cautiously. Accelerate gently, take turns more slowly, and leave extra room for stopping.



- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Turn-Signal Switch (may be on both handles) | 10. Light Switch      |
| 2. Gear-Change Lever                           | 11. Kick Starter      |
| 3. Tachometer                                  | 12. Horn Button       |
| 4. Speedometer & Odometer                      | 13. Front Brake Lever |
| 5. Rear Brake Pedal                            |                       |
| 6. Throttle                                    |                       |
| 7. Clutch Lever                                |                       |
| 8. Engine Cut-Off Switch                       |                       |
| 9. Electric Starting Switch                    |                       |

**NOTE:** Check this equipment before you pull onto the road, each motorcycle may be different.

### Check Your Motorcycle

A motorcycle needs more frequent attention than a car. A minor technical failure in a car seldom leads to anything more than an inconvenience for the driver.

If something's wrong with the motorcycle, you'll want to find out about it before you get in traffic. Make a complete check of your motorcycle before every ride.

Before mounting any motorcycle, make the following checks:

- **Tires** — Check the air pressure.
- **Fluids** — Oil and fluid levels. At a minimum, check hydraulic fluids and coolants weekly. Look under the bike for signs of fluid leaks.

- **Headlights and Taillight** — Check them both. Test your dimmer to make sure both high and low beams are working.
- **Turn Signals** — Turn on both right and left turn signals. Make sure all four lights flash.
- **Brake Light** — Try both brake controls, and make sure each one turns on the brake light.

Once you have mounted the motorcycle, complete the following checks before starting out:

- **Clutch and Throttle** — Make sure they work smoothly. The throttle handgrip should return quickly to the idle position when you let go.
- **Mirrors** — Clean and adjust both mirrors before starting. It's difficult to ride with one hand while you try to adjust a mirror. Adjust each mirror so you can see the lane behind and as much as possible of the lane next to you. When properly adjusted, a mirror may show the edge of your arm or shoulder — but it's the road behind and to the side that's most important.
- **Brakes** — Try the front and rear brake levers one at a time. Make sure each one feels firm and holds the motorcycle when the brake is fully applied.
- **Horn** — Try the horn. Make sure it works.

In addition to the checks you should make before every trip, check the wheels, cables, and fasteners at least once a week.

## 2. More than half of all crashes:

- A. Occur at speeds greater than 35 m.p.h.
- B. Happen at night.
- C. Are caused by equipment failures.
- D. Involve riders who have ridden their cycles less than six months.



## **KNOW YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

“Accident” implies an unforeseen event that occurs without anyone’s fault or negligence. Most often in traffic, that is not the case. In fact, most people involved in a crash can usually claim some responsibility for what takes place.

Consider a situation where someone tries to squeeze through an intersection on a yellow light turning red. Your light turns green. You pull into the intersection without checking for possible latecomers. That is all it takes for the two of you to tangle. It was the other driver’s responsibility to stop. And it was your responsibility to look before pulling out. Neither of you held up your end of the deal. Just because someone else is the first to start the chain of events leading to a collision, it doesn’t leave any of us free of responsibility.

As a rider you can’t be sure that other operators will see you or yield the right of way. To lessen your chances of a crash occurring:

- **Be visible** — wear proper clothing, use your headlight (set on dim during daylight hours), and ride in the most visible lane position.
- **Communicate your intentions** — use the proper signals, brake light, and lane position.
- **Maintain an adequate space cushion** — allow extra space when following, being followed, lane sharing, passing, and being passed.
- **Scan your path of travel 12 seconds ahead.**
- **Identify and anticipate possible hazards in your path of travel.**
- **Be prepared to act** — remain alert and know how to carry out proper collision-avoidance skills.

Blame doesn’t matter when someone is injured in a crash. There is rarely a single cause of any crash. Awareness and the ability to make critical decisions, and carry them out separates responsible riders from all the rest. Remember, it is up to you to keep from being the cause of, or an unprepared participant in, any collision.

## Ride Within Your Abilities

This Manual cannot teach you how to control direction, speed, or balance. That's something you can learn only through practice and proper training. But control begins with knowing your abilities and riding within them and the rules of the road.

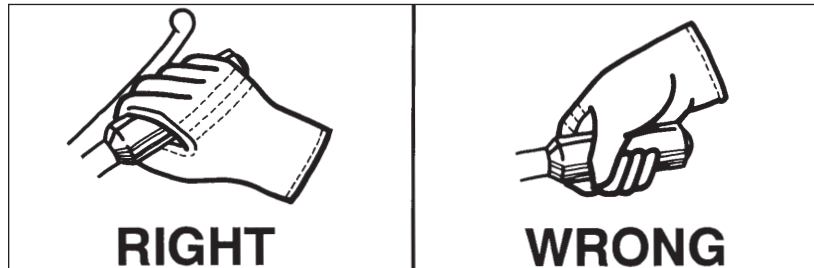
### **BASIC VEHICLE CONTROL**

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#### **Body Position**

To control a motorcycle well:

- **Seat** — Sit far enough forward so that arms are slightly bent when you hold the handlegrips. Bending your arms permits you to turn the handlebars without having to stretch.
- **Hands** — Hold the handlegrips firmly to keep your grip over rough surfaces. Start with your right wrist flat. This will help you keep from accidentally using too much throttle — especially if you need to reach for the brake suddenly. Also, adjust the handlebars so your hands are even with or below your elbows. This permits you to use the proper muscles for precision steering.



- **Knees** — Keep your knees against the gas tank to help you keep your balance as the motorcycle turns.
- **Feet** — Keep your feet firmly on the footpegs to maintain balance. Don't drag your feet. If your foot catches on something, you can be injured and it could affect your control of the motorcycle. Keep your feet near the controls so you can get to them quickly if needed. Also, don't let your toes point downward — they may get caught between the road and the footpegs.
- **Posture** — Sit so you can use your arms to steer the motorcycle rather than to hold yourself up.

### **Shifting Gears**

There is more to shifting gears than simply getting the motorcycle to pick up speed smoothly. Learning to use the gears correctly when downshifting, turning, or starting on hills is important for safe motorcycle operation.

To make a smooth stop, squeeze the clutch lever and without releasing the lever, shift down through the gears so that you are in first gear when you come to a stop. Remain in first gear while you are stopped so that you can move out quickly if you need to.

Make certain you are riding slowly enough when you shift into a lower gear. If not, the motorcycle will lurch, and the rear wheel may skid. When riding downhill or shifting into first gear you may need to use the brakes to slow down enough before downshifting safely.

It is best to change gears before entering a turn. However, sometimes shifting while in the turn is necessary. If so, remember to shift smoothly. A sudden change in power to the rear wheel can cause a skid.

### **Braking**

Most motorcycles have two brakes: one each for the front and rear wheel. Use both of them at the same time. The front brake is more powerful and can provide as much as three-quarters of your total stopping power. The front brake is safe if you use it properly. Remember:

- Use both brakes every time you slow or stop. Using only the rear brake for “normal” stops will not permit you to develop the habit or skill of using the front brake properly in an emergency.
- Squeeze the front brake and press down on the rear. Grabbing at the front brake or jamming down on the rear can cause the brakes to lock, resulting in control problems.
- Apply both brakes at the same time. The sooner you apply the front brake, the sooner it will start slowing you down.
- If you know the technique, using both brakes in a turn is possible, although it should be done very carefully. When leaning the motorcycle some of the traction is used for cornering. Less traction is available for stopping. A skid can occur if you apply too much brake. Use caution and squeeze the brake lever. Also, using the front brake incorrectly on a slippery surface may be hazardous.
- Some motorcycles have integrated braking systems that link the front and rear brakes together by applying the rear brake pedal. (Consult the owner’s manual for a detailed explanation on the operation and effective use of these systems.)

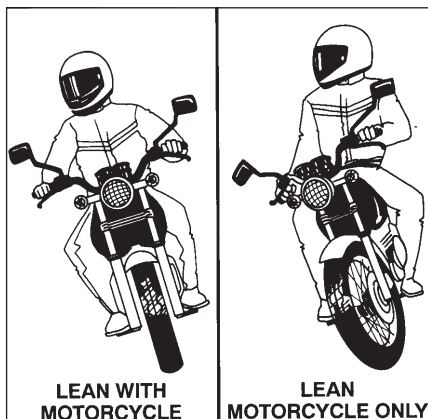
## Turning

Riders often try to take curves or turns too fast. When they can't hold the turn, they end up crossing into another lane of traffic or going off the road. Or, they overreact and brake too hard, causing a skid and loss of control. Approach turns and curves with caution.

Use four steps for better control:

- **SLOW** — Reduce speed before the turn by closing the throttle and, if necessary, applying both brakes.
- **LOOK** — Look through the turn to where you want to go. Turn just your head and eyes, not your shoulders, and keep your eyes level with the horizon.
- **LEAN** — To turn, the motorcycle must lean. To lean the motorcycle, push on the handgrip in the direction of the turn. Press left with your left hand — lean left — go left. Press right with your right hand — lean right — go right. Higher speeds and/or tighter turns require the motorcycle to lean more.
- **ROLL** — Roll on the throttle through the turn. Maintain steady speed or accelerate gradually. Avoid decelerating in the turn.

In normal turns, the rider and the motorcycle should lean together at the same angle.



In slow tight turns, lean the motorcycle only and keep your body straight.

### 3. When turning, you should:

- A. Turn your head and shoulders to look through turns.
- B. Keep your arms straight.
- C. Keep your knees away from the gas tank.
- D. Turn just your head and eyes to look where you are going.

## **KEEPING YOUR DISTANCE**

The best protection you can have is distance — a “cushion of space” — all around your cycle. If someone else makes a mistake, distance permits you:

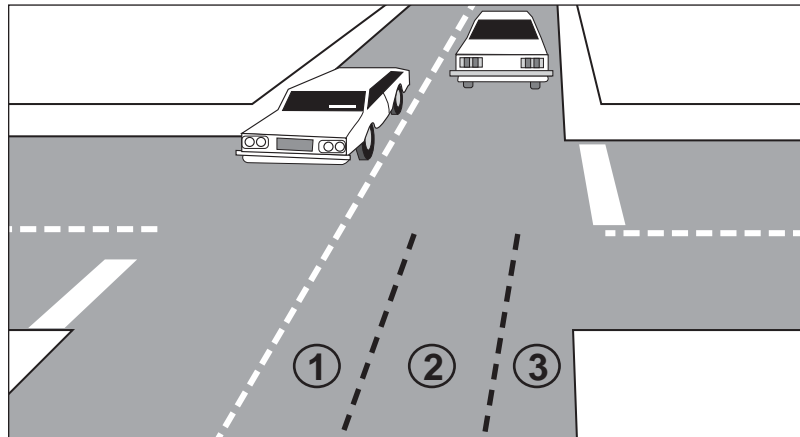
- Time to react.
- Room to maneuver.

### **Lane Positions**

In some ways the size of the motorcycle can work to your advantage. Each traffic lane gives a motorcycle three areas or paths of travel as indicated in the illustration below.

Your lane position should:

- Increase your ability to see and be seen.
- Avoid other drivers' blind spots.
- Avoid surface hazards.
- Protect your lane from other drivers.
- Communicate your intentions.
- Avoid wind blast from other vehicles.
- Provide an escape route.



Select the appropriate path to maximize your space cushion and make yourself more visible to others on the road.

In general, there is no single best position for riders to be seen and to maintain a space cushion around the cycle. Under normal circumstances, no portion of the lane need be avoided — including the center.

Position yourself in the portion of the lane where you have the best view of the road, are most likely to be seen, and where you can maintain a space cushion around you. Change position as traffic situations change.

Unless the road is wet, the average center strip permits adequate traction to ride on safely. The strip in the center portion of the lane that collects drippings from cars is usually no more than two feet wide. You can operate to the left or right of this strip and still be within the center portion of the traffic lane. Big buildups of oil and grease are usually found at busy intersections or toll booths.

### **Following Another Vehicle**

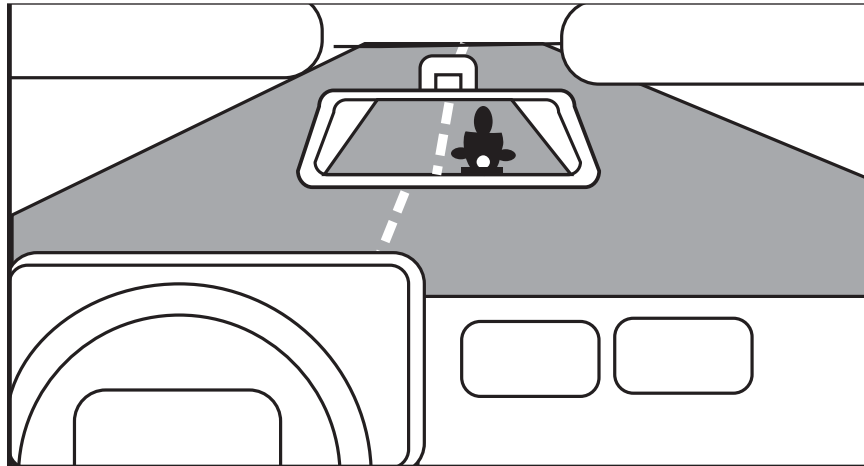
“Following too closely” is a major factor in crashes caused by motorcyclists. In traffic, motorcycles need the same amount of distance as cars to stop safely. Normally, a minimum of three seconds distance should be maintained behind the vehicle ahead. To gauge your following distance:

1. Pick out a marker, such as a pavement marking or lamppost, on or near the road ahead.
2. When the rear bumper of the vehicle ahead passes the marker, count off the seconds: “one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, one-thousand three.”
3. If you reach the marker before you reach “three,” you are following too closely.

A three-second following distance leaves a minimum amount of space to stop or swerve if the driver ahead stops suddenly. It also permits a better view of potholes and other hazards in the road.

A larger cushion of space is needed if your motorcycle will take longer than normal to stop. If the pavement is slippery, if you cannot see through the vehicle ahead, if traffic is heavy and someone may squeeze in front of you, or if you are pulling a trailer, open up a three-second or more following distance.

Keep well behind the vehicle ahead even when you are stopped. This will make it easier to get out of the way if someone bears down on you from behind. It will also give you a cushion of space if the vehicle ahead starts to back up for some reason.



When behind a car, ride where the driver can see you in the rearview mirror. Riding in the center portion of the lane should put your image in the middle of the rearview mirror — where a driver is most likely to see you.

Riding in the left third of a lane may permit the driver of a truck or van to see you in a sideview mirror and helps you see the traffic ahead. But remember that most drivers don't look at their sideview mirrors nearly as often as they check the rearview mirror. If the traffic and road situation allows, the center portion of the lane may be the best place for you to be seen by the drivers ahead and to prevent lane sharing by others.

### **Being Followed**

Speeding up to lose someone following too closely only ends up with someone tailgating you at a higher speed.

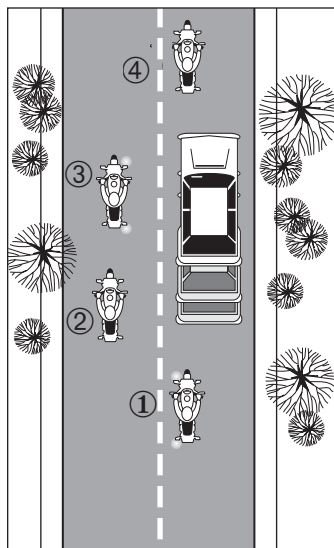
A better way to handle tailgaters is to get them in front of you. When someone is following too closely, change lanes when possible and let them pass. If you can't do this, slow down and open up extra space ahead of you to allow room for both you and the tailgater to stop. This will also encourage them to pass. If they don't pass, you will have given yourself and the tailgater more time and space to react in case an emergency does develop.

### **Passing and Being Passed**

Passing and being passed by another vehicle is not much different than with a car. However, visibility is more critical. Be sure other drivers see you, and that you see potential hazards.

### Passing

1. Ride in the left portion of the lane at a safe following distance to increase your line of sight and make you more visible. Signal and check for oncoming traffic. Use your mirrors and turn your head to the left to look for traffic behind.
2. Move into the left lane and accelerate. Select a lane position that doesn't crowd the car you are passing and provides space to avoid hazards in your lane.
3. Ride through the blind spot as quickly as possible.
4. Signal again, and complete mirror and headchecks before returning to your original lane.

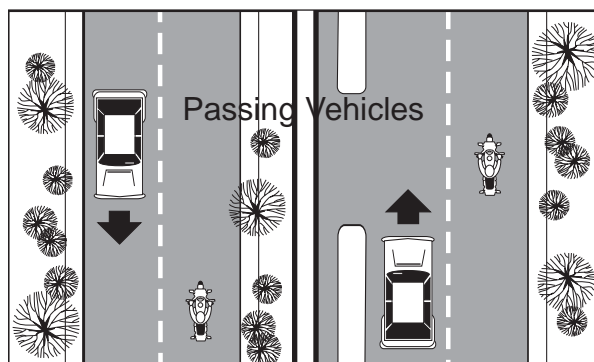


*Remember, passes must be completed within posted speed limits, and only where permitted. Know your signs and road markings!*

### Being Passed

When you are being passed from behind or by an oncoming vehicle, choose your lane position to avoid the following:

- **The other vehicle** — A slight mistake by you or the passing driver could cause a sideswipe.
- **Extended mirrors** — Some drivers forget that their mirrors hang out farther than their fenders.





- **Objects thrown from windows** — Even if the driver knows you're there, a passenger may not see you and might toss something on you or the road ahead of you.
- **Blasts of wind from larger vehicles** — They can affect your control. You have more room for error if you are in the middle portion when hit by this blast than if you are on either side of the lane.

Riding any closer to these hazards could put you in a hazardous position. Do not move into the portion of the lane farthest from the passing vehicle. It might invite the other driver to cut back into your lane too early.

### Lane Sharing

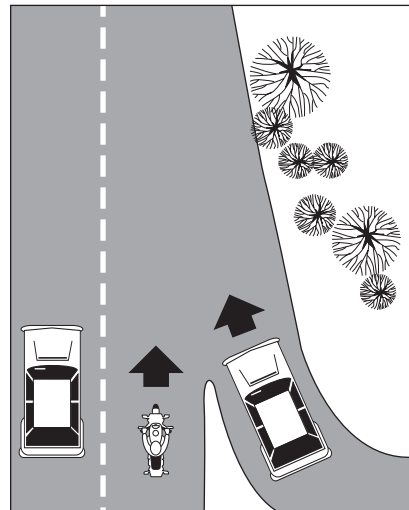
Cars and motorcycles need a full lane to operate safely.

Riding between rows of stopped or moving cars in the same lane can leave you vulnerable to the unexpected. A hand could come out of a window; a door could open; a car could turn suddenly. Discourage lane sharing by others. Keep a center-portion position whenever drivers might be tempted to squeeze by you. Drivers are most tempted to do this:

- In heavy, bumper-to-bumper traffic.
- When they want to pass you.
- When you are preparing to turn at an intersection.
- When you are getting in an exit lane, or leaving a highway.

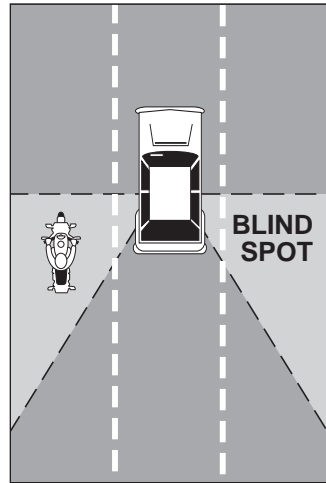
### Merging Cars

Drivers on an entrance ramp may not see you on the highway. Give them plenty of room. Change to another lane if one is open. If there is no room for a lane change, adjust your speed to open up space for the merging driver.



### **Cars Alongside**

Do not ride next to cars or trucks in other lanes if you do not have to. You might be in the blind spot of a car in the next lane, which could switch into your lane without warning. Cars in the next lane also block your escape if you come upon danger in your own lane. Speed up or drop back to find a place clear of traffic on both sides.



#### **4. Usually, a good way to handle tailgaters is to:**

- A. Change lanes if possible and let them pass.
- B. Use your horn and make obscene gestures.
- C. Speed up to put distance between you and the tailgater.
- D. Ignore them.

## **SIPDE**

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Good experienced riders remain aware of what is going on around them. They improve their riding strategy by using SIPDE, a 5-step process used to make appropriate judgments, and apply them correctly in different traffic situations:

- Scan
- Identify
- Predict
- Decide
- Execute

Let's examine each of these steps.

### **Scan**

Search aggressively ahead, to the sides and behind to avoid potential hazards even before they arise. How assertively you search, and how much time and space you have, can eliminate or reduce harm. Focus even more on finding potential escape routes in or around intersections, shopping areas, school and construction zones.

Search for:

- Oncoming traffic that may turn left in front of you.
- Traffic coming from the left and right.
- Traffic approaching from behind.

Be especially alert in areas with limited visibility. Visually "busy" surroundings could hide you and your motorcycle from others.

### **Identify**

Locate hazards and potential conflicts.

- Vehicles and other motorcycles — may move into your path and increase collision impact.
- Pedestrians and animals — are unpredictable, and make short, quick moves.
- Stationary objects — potholes, guard rails, bridges, roadway signs, hedges, tire debris, lumber, or trees won't move into your path but may influence your riding strategy.

### **Predict**

Consider the speed, distance, and direction of hazards to anticipate how they may affect you. Cars moving into your path are more critical than those moving away or remaining stationary.

Predict where a collision may occur. Completing this “what if . . .?” phrase to estimate results of contacting or attempting to avoid a hazard depends on your knowledge and experience.

### **Decide**

Decide when, where, and how to act based on types of hazards you encounter:

- Single Hazard
- Multiple Hazards
- Stationary
- Moving

Weigh consequences of each hazard separately, whether single or multiple hazards are involved.

### **Execute**

In high potential risk areas, such as intersections, shopping areas, school and construction zones, cover the clutch and both brakes to reduce the time you need to react.

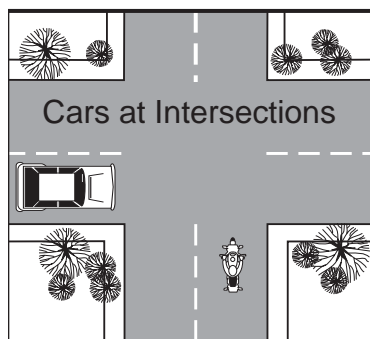
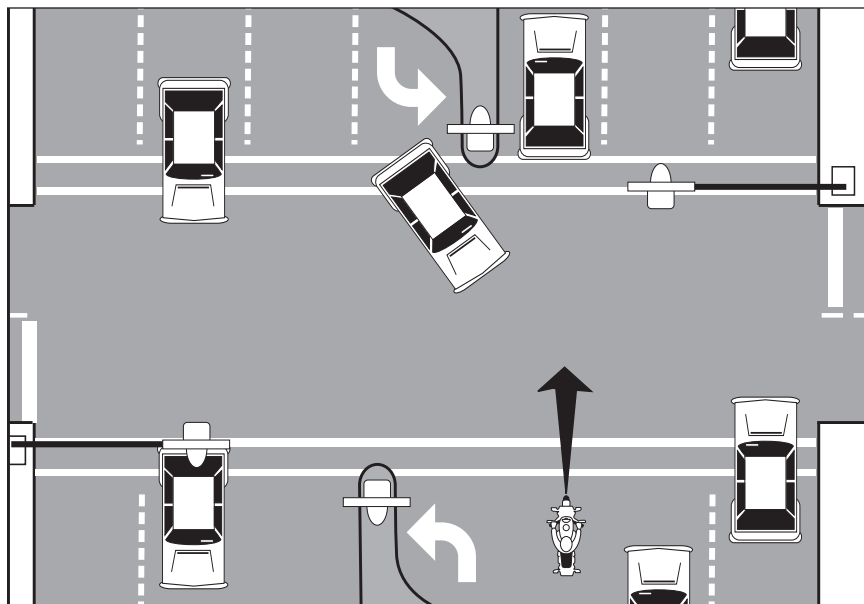
To create more space and minimize harm from any hazard:

- Communicate your presence with lights and/or horn.
- Adjust your speed by accelerating, stopping, or slowing.
- Adjust your position and/or direction.

Apply the old adage “one step at a time” to handle two or more hazards. Adjust speed to permit two hazards to separate. Then deal with them one at a time as single hazards. Decision making becomes more complex with three or more hazards. Weigh consequences of each and give equal distance to the hazards.

## **INTERSECTIONS**

The greatest potential for conflict between you and other traffic is at intersections. An intersection can be in the middle of an urban area or at a driveway on a residential street — anywhere traffic may cross your path of travel. Over half of motorcycle/car collisions are caused by drivers entering a rider's right-of-way. Oncoming cars that turn left in front of you, and cars on side streets that pull into your path, are the two biggest dangers. Your use of SIPDE (see page 19) at intersections is critical.

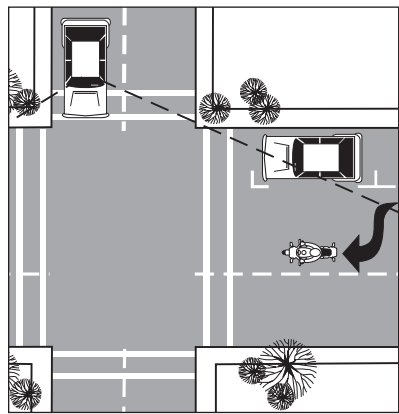


There are no guarantees that other drivers see you. Never count on “eye contact” as a sign that a driver will yield. Too often, drivers look right at motorcyclists and still fail to “see” them. The only eyes that you can count on are your own. If a car can enter your path, assume that it will. Good riders are always “looking for trouble” — not to get into it, but to stay out of it.

Increase your chances of being seen at intersections. Ride with your headlight on (set on dim during daylight hours) in a lane position that provides the best view of oncoming traffic. Provide a space cushion around the motorcycle that permits you to take evasive action.

As you approach the intersection, select a lane position to increase your visibility to the driver. Cover the clutch and both brakes to reduce reaction time.

Reduce your speed. After entering the intersection, move away from oncoming vehicles preparing to turn. Do not change speed or position radically. The driver might think that you are preparing to turn. This strategy should also be used whenever a vehicle in the oncoming lane of traffic is signalling for a left turn, whether an intersection is involved or not.



### **Blind Intersections**

If you approach a blind intersection, move to the portion of the lane that will bring you into another driver's field of sight at the earliest possible moment. In this picture, the rider has moved to the left portion of the lane — away from the parked car — so the driver on the cross street can see him as soon as possible.

**Remember, the key is to see as much as possible and remain visible to others while protecting your space.**

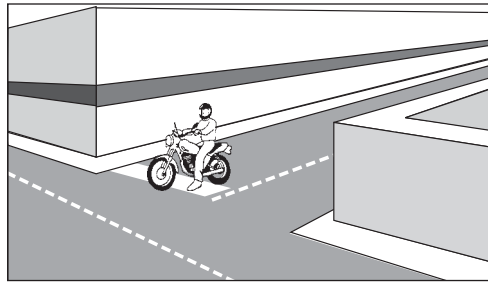
If you have a stop sign or stop line, stop there first. Then edge forward and stop again, just short of where the cross-traffic lane meets your lane. From that position, lean your body forward and look around buildings, parked cars, or bushes to see if anything is coming. Just make sure your front wheel stays out of the cross lane of travel while you're looking.

### **Passing Parked Cars**

When passing parked cars, stay toward the left of your lane. You can avoid problems caused by car doors opening, drivers getting out of cars, or people stepping from between cars. If oncoming traffic is present, it is usually best to remain in the center-lane position to maximize your space cushion.

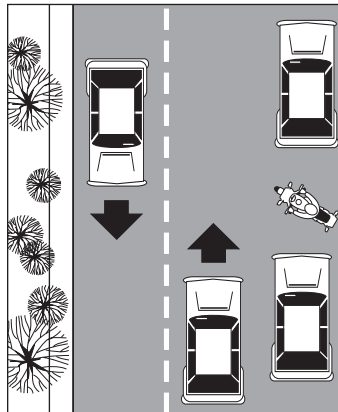
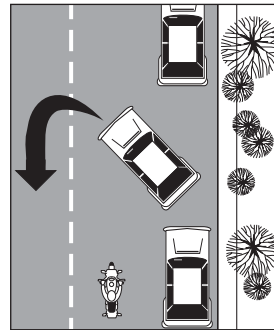
#### **5. To reduce your reaction time, you should:**

- A. Ride slower than the speed limit.
- B. Cover the clutch and the brakes.
- C. Shift into neutral when slowing.
- D. Pull in the clutch when turning.



A bigger problem can occur if the driver pulls away from the curb without checking for traffic behind. Even if he does look, he may fail to see you. In either event, the driver might cut into your path. Slow down or change lanes to make room for someone cutting in.

Cars making a sudden U-turn are the most dangerous. They may cut you off entirely, blocking the whole road-way and leaving you with no place to go. Since you can't tell what a driver will do, get the driver's attention. Sound your horn and continue with caution.



#### **Parking at the Roadside**

Angle your motorcycle to see in both directions without straining or having the cycle in the lane of travel. A clear view is particularly important to turn across a lane of traffic. When possible, back into the parking spot to permit riding the motorcycle out into traffic.

#### **6. Making eye contact with other drivers:**

- A. Is a good sign that they see you.
- B. Is important when approaching an intersection.
- C. Doesn't mean that the driver will yield.
- D. Decreases your chances of being involved in a collision.

## **SEE AND BE SEEN**

In collisions with motorcyclists, drivers often say that they never saw the motorcycle. From ahead or behind, a motorcycle's outline is much smaller than a car's. Also, it's hard to see something you are not looking for, and most drivers are not looking for motorcycles. More likely, they are looking through the skinny, two-wheeled silhouette in search of cars that may pose a problem to them.

Even if a driver does see you coming, you aren't necessarily safe. Smaller vehicles appear farther away, and seem to be traveling slower than they actually are. It is common for drivers to pull out in front of motorcyclists, thinking they have plenty of time. Too often, they are wrong.

However, you can do many things to make it easier for others to recognize you and your cycle.

### **Clothing**

Most collisions occur in broad daylight. Wear bright clothing to increase your chances of being seen. Remember, your body is half of the visible surface area of the rider/cycle unit when viewed from the front or the back.

Wearing bright orange, yellow, or green clothing is your best bet for being seen. Your helmet can do more than protect you in a collision. Brightly colored helmets can help others see you.

Any bright color is better than drab or dark colors. Reflective or bright colored clothing (helmet and jacket or vest) is best.

Reflective material on the sides of your helmet and clothing will help drivers coming from the side notice you. Reflective material can also be a big help for drivers coming toward you or from behind.

### **Headlight**

The best way to help others see your motorcycle is to keep the headlight on — at all times. Studies show that, during the day, a motorcycle with its light on is twice as likely to be noticed. Be sure the headlight is adjusted properly and use the “dim” setting during daylight hours.

### **Signals**

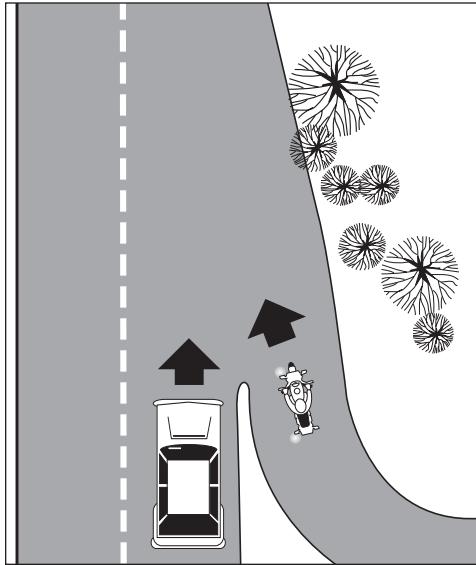
The signals on a motorcycle are similar to those on a car. They tell others what you plan to do. However, due to a rider's added vulnerability, signals are even more important. Use them anytime you plan to change lanes. Use them even when you think no one else is around. It's the car you don't see that's going to give you the most trouble. Your signal lights also make you easier to spot.



That's why it's a good idea to use your turn signals even when what you plan to do is obvious.

When you enter onto a freeway, drivers approaching from behind are more likely to see your signal blinking and make room for you.

Turning your signal light on before each turn reduces confusion and frustration for the traffic around you. Once you turn, make sure your signal is off or a driver may pull directly into your path, thinking you plan to turn again. Use your signals at every turn so drivers can react accordingly. Don't make them guess what you intend to do.



### **Brake Light**

Your motorcycle's brake light is usually not as noticeable as the brake lights on a car — particularly when your taillight is on. (It goes on with the headlight.) Help others notice you by flashing your brake light before you slow down. It is especially important to flash your brake light before:

- You slow more quickly than others might expect (turning off a high-speed highway).
- You slow where others may not expect it (in the middle of a block or at an alley).

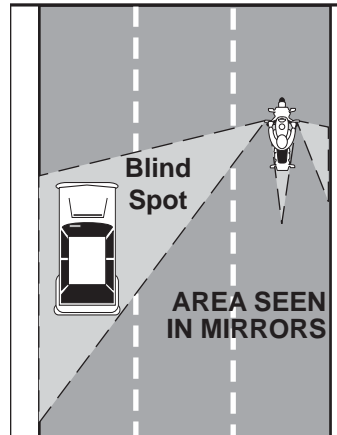
If you are being followed closely, it's a good idea to flash your brake light before you slow. The tailgater may be watching you and not see something ahead that will make you slow down.

### **Using Your Mirrors**

While it's most important to keep track of what's happening ahead, you can't afford to ignore situations behind. Traffic conditions change quickly. Knowing what's going on behind can help you make a safe decision about how to handle trouble ahead.

Frequent mirror checks should be part of your normal scanning routine. Make a special point of using your mirrors:

- **When you are stopped at an intersection.** Watch cars coming up from behind. If the driver isn't paying attention, he could be on top of you before he sees you.
- **Before you change lanes.** Make sure no one is about to pass you.
- **Before you slow down.** The driver behind may not expect you to slow, or may be unsure about where you will slow. For example, you signal a turn and the driver thinks you plan to turn at a distant intersection rather than at a nearer driveway.



Most motorcycles have rounded (convex) mirrors. These provide a wider view of the road behind than do flat mirrors. They also make cars seem farther away than they really are. If you are not used to convex mirrors, get familiar with them. (While you are stopped, pick out a parked car in your mirror. Form a mental image of how far away it is. Then, turn around and look at it to see how close you came.) Practice with your mirrors until you become a good judge of distance. Even then, allow extra distance before you change lanes.

### Head Checks

Checking your mirrors is not enough. Motorcycles have “blind spots” like cars. Before you change lanes, merge onto a freeway, or pass another vehicle, you should turn your head and look to the side to spot any car(s) about to pass you.

On a road with several lanes, check the far lane and the one next to you. A driver in the distant lane may head for the same space you plan to take.

### Horn

Be ready to use your horn to get someone's attention quickly. It is a good idea to give a quick beep before passing anyone that may move into your lane.

Here are some situations:

- A driver in the lane next to you is driving too close to the vehicle ahead and may want to pass.
- A parked car has someone in the driver's seat.
- Someone is in the street, riding a bicycle or walking.

In an emergency, press and hold the horn button. Be ready to stop or swerve away from the danger.

### **Riding at Night**

At night it is harder for you to see and be seen. Noticing your headlight or taillight amid the car lights around you is not easy for other drivers. To compensate, you should:

- **Reduce Your Speed** — Ride even slower than you would during the day — particularly on roads you don't know well. This will increase your chances of avoiding a hazard because a headlight does not allow you to see as far ahead as in daylight.
- **Increase Distance** — Distances are harder to judge at night than during the day. Your eyes rely upon shadows and light contrasts to determine how far away an object is and how fast it is coming. These contrasts are missing or distorted under artificial lights at night. Open up a three-second following distance. And allow more distance to pass and be passed.
- **Use the Car Ahead** — The headlights of the car ahead can give you a better view of the road than even your high beam can. Headlights and/or taillights bouncing up and down can alert you to bumps or rough pavement.
- **Use Your High Beam** — Get all the light you can. Use your high beam whenever you are not following or meeting a car. Wear reflective materials — vests, etc.

Be flexible about lane position. Change to whatever portion of the lane is best able to help you see, be seen, and keep an adequate space cushion.

### **7. You should always perform a head check before you:**

- A. Change lanes.
- B. Merge onto a freeway.
- C. Pass another vehicle.
- D. All of the above.

## **CRASH AVOIDANCE**

No matter how careful you are, there will be times when you find yourself in a dangerous situation. Your chances of getting out safely depend on your ability to react quickly and properly. Often, a crash occurs because a rider is not prepared or skilled in obstacle-avoidance maneuvers.

Know when and how to stop or swerve, two skills critical to avoiding a crash. It is not always desirable or possible to stop quickly to avoid an obstacle. Riders must also be able to swerve around an obstacle. Determining the skill necessary for the situation is important as well.

Studies show that most riders involved in crashes:

- Underbrake the front tire and overbrake the rear.
- Do not separate braking from swerving.

The following information offers some good advice.

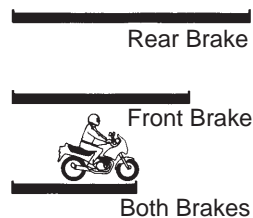
### **Quick Stops**

To stop quickly, apply both brakes at the same time. Don't be shy about using the front brake, but don't "grab" at it, either. Squeeze the brake lever steadily and firmly. Apply the front brake fully. If the front wheel locks, immediately release the front brake then reapply firmly. At the same time, press down on the rear brake. If you accidentally lock the rear brake while on a straight section of road, keep it locked until you have completely stopped. Even with a locked rear wheel, you can control the cycle on a straightaway if it is upright and going in a straight line.

If you must stop quickly while turning or riding a curve, it may not always be possible to straighten the motorcycle and then stop. If you must brake while leaning, apply the brakes and reduce the throttle. As you slow, you can reduce your lean angle and apply more brake pressure until the motorcycle is straight and maximum brake pressure is possible. If you "straighten" the handlebar in the last few feet of stopping, the motorcycle should be straight up and in balance.

Always use both brakes at the same time to stop. The front brake can provide 70% or more of the potential stopping power.

### **Stopping Distance**



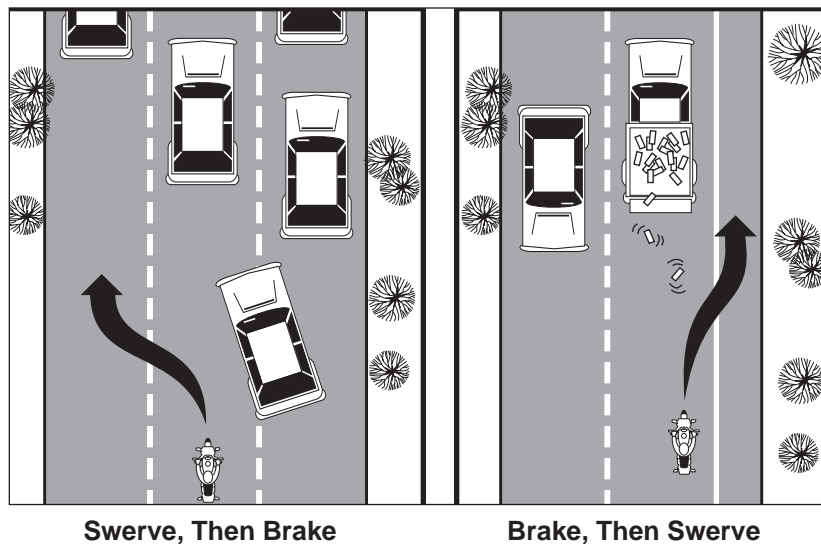
### **Swerving or Turning Quickly**

Sometimes you may not have enough room to stop, even if you use both brakes properly. The car ahead might squeal to a stop or an object might appear suddenly in your path. The only way to avoid a crash may be to turn quickly, swerve, or ride over the obstacle.

A swerve is any sudden change in direction. It can be two quick turns, or a rapid shift to the side. Apply hand pressure to the handgrip in your intended direction of escape. This will get the motorcycle to lean quickly. The sharper the turn(s), the more the bike must lean.

Keep your knees against the tank and your feet solidly on the pegs. Let the bike move underneath you. Make your escape route the target of your vision. Press on the opposite handgrip, once you clear the obstacle to return to your original direction of travel. To swerve to the left, press left then right to recover. To swerve to the right, press right then left.

Try to stay in your own lane. Change lanes only if you have enough time to make sure there are no vehicles in the other lane. You should be able to squeeze by most obstacles without leaving your lane.



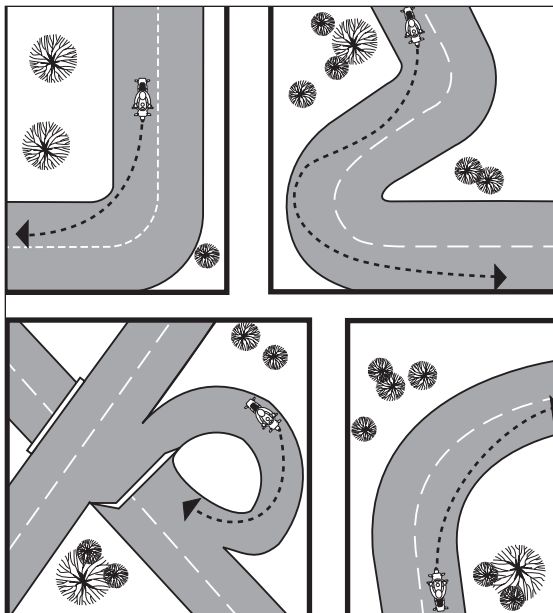
**IF BRAKING IS REQUIRED, SEPARATE IT FROM SWERVING.**  
**Brake before or after — never while swerving.**

### Riding a Curve

A primary cause of single-vehicle crashes is motorcyclists running wide in a curve or turn and colliding with the roadway or a fixed object.

Every curve is different. Be alert to whether a curve remains constant, gradually widens, gets tighter, or involves multiple turns.

Use caution when braking on right turns. If you brake too hard, your bike may straighten upright and cause you to swerve out into the oncoming lane of traffic.



Ride within your skill level and posted speed limits.

Your best path may not always follow the curve of the road. Change lane position depending on traffic and road conditions. If no traffic is present and your riding abilities are up to it, you may choose to start at the outside of a curve to increase your line of sight and the effective radius of the turn. As you turn, move toward the inside of the curve, and as you pass the center, move to the outside to exit.

Another alternative is to move to the center area of your lane before entering a curve — and stay there until you exit. This permits you to spot approaching traffic as soon as possible. You can also adjust for traffic “crowding” the center line, or debris blocking part of your lane.

### 8. The best way to stop quickly is to:

- A. Use the front brake only.
- B. Use the rear brake first.
- C. Throttle down and use the front brake.
- D. Use both brakes at the same time.

## **HANDLING DANGEROUS SURFACES**

Your chance of falling or being involved in a collision increases whenever you ride across:

- Uneven surfaces or obstacles.
- Slippery surfaces.
- Railroad tracks.
- Grooves and gratings.

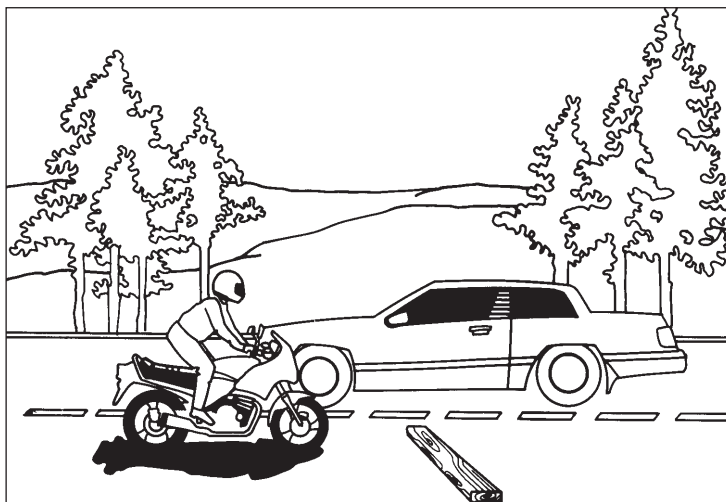
### **Uneven Surfaces and Obstacles**

Watch for uneven surfaces such as bumps, broken pavement, potholes, or small pieces of highway trash.

First, determine if it is possible to go over the obstacle. Approach it at as close to a 90° angle as possible. Look where you want to go to control your path of travel. If you have to ride over the obstacle, you should:

- Slow down to reduce the jolt if time permits.
- Make sure the motorcycle is straight up.
- Rise slightly off the seat with your weight on the footpegs to absorb the shock with your knees and elbows.

Rising off the seat will reduce your chances of being thrown off the bike. However, controlling the throttle can be somewhat tricky. Practice this in an area such as an empty parking lot away from traffic.



If you ride over an object on the street, pull off the road and check your tires and rims for damage before riding any farther.

### Slippery Surfaces

Motorcycles handle better when ridden on surfaces that permit good traction.

Surfaces that provide poor traction include:

- Wet pavement, particularly just after it starts to rain and before surface oil washes to the side of the road.
- Gravel roads, or where sand and gravel collect.
- Mud, snow, and ice.
- Lane markings, steel plates, and manhole covers, especially when wet.

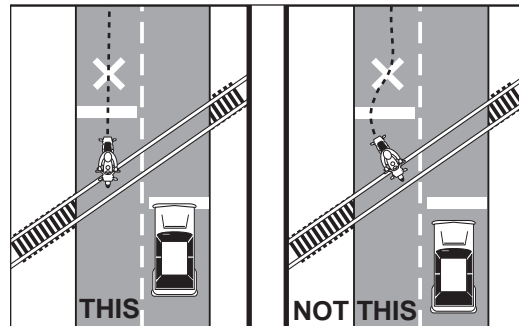
To ride safely on slippery surfaces:

- **Reduce Speed** — Slow down before you get to a slippery surface to lessen your chances of skidding when stopping or turning. Your motorcycle needs more distance to stop. It is particularly important to reduce speed before entering wet curves.
- **Avoid Sudden Moves** — Any sudden change in speed or direction can cause a skid. Be as smooth as possible when you speed up, shift gears, turn, or brake.
- **Use Both Brakes** — The front brake is more effective even on a slippery surface. Squeeze the brake lever gradually to avoid locking the front wheel.
  - Roads are the slickest when it first starts to rain until the dirt and oil are washed away.
  - Watch for oil spots when you put your foot down to stop or park. You may slip and fall.
  - Dirt and gravel collect along the sides of the road — especially on curves and ramps leading to and from highways. Stay away from the edge of the road, particularly when making sharp turns and getting on or off freeways at high speeds.
  - Rain dries and snow melts faster on some sections of a road than on others. Patches of ice tend to crop up in low or shaded areas and on bridges and overpasses. Wet surfaces or wet leaves are just as slippery. Ride on the least slippery portion of the lane.

Cautious riders steer clear of roads covered with ice or snow. If you can't avoid a slippery surface, keep your bike straight up and proceed as slowly as possible. If you encounter a large surface so slippery that you must coast, or travel at a walking pace, consider letting your feet skim along the surface. If the bike starts to fall, you can catch yourself. Be sure to keep off the brakes. If possible, squeeze the clutch and coast. Attempting this maneuver at anything other than the slowest of speeds could prove hazardous.

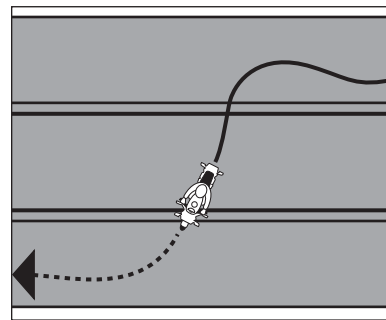


### Railroad Tracks, Trolley Tracks, and Pavement Seams



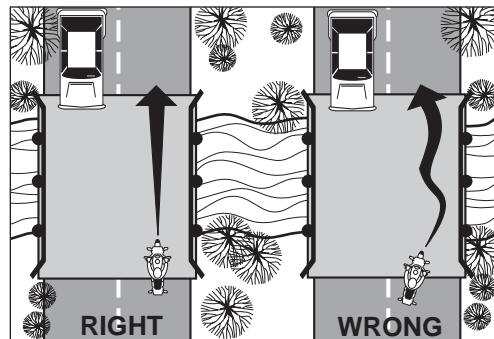
Usually it is safer to ride straight within your lane to cross tracks. Turning to take tracks head-on (at a 90° angle) can be more dangerous — your path may carry you into another lane of traffic.

Move far enough away from tracks, ruts, or pavement seams that run parallel to your course to cross at an angle of at least 45°. Then, make a quick, sharp turn. Edging across could catch your tires and throw you off balance.



### Grooves and Gratings

Riding over rain grooves or bridge gratings will cause a motorcycle to weave. The uneasy, wandering feeling is generally not hazardous. Relax, slow your speed and ride straight across. Crossing at an angle forces riders to zigzag to stay in the lane. The zigzag is far more hazardous than the wandering feeling.



#### 9. When you ride across a bridge grating:

- A. Ride at the far right of the lane.
- B. Increase your speed.
- C. Slowly zig-zag across the grating.
- D. Relax, slow your speed, and ride straight across.

## **MECHANICAL PROBLEMS**

You can find yourself in an emergency the moment something goes wrong with your motorcycle. In dealing with any mechanical problem, take into account the road and traffic conditions you face. Here are some guidelines that can help you handle mechanical problems safely.

### **Tire Failure**

You will seldom hear a tire go flat. If the cycle starts handling differently, it may be a tire failure. This can be dangerous. You must be able to tell from the way the cycle reacts. If one of your tires suddenly loses air, react quickly to keep your balance. Pull off and check the tires.

If the front tire goes flat, the steering will feel “heavy.” A front-wheel flat is particularly hazardous because it affects your steering. You have to steer well to keep your balance.

If the rear tire goes flat, the back of the motorcycle will jerk or weave from side to side. If either tire goes flat while riding:

- Hold the handlegrips firmly and keep a straight course.
- Gradually apply the brake of the tire that isn’t flat, if you are sure which one it is.
- When the motorcycle slows, edge to the side of the road and stop.

### **Stuck Throttle**

Twist the throttle back and forth several times. If the throttle cable is stuck, this may free it. If the throttle stays stuck immediately operate the engine cut-off switch and pull in the clutch at the same time. This will remove power from the rear wheel, though engine noise may not immediately decline. Once the motorcycle is “under control,” pull off and stop.

After you have stopped, check the throttle cable carefully to find the source of the trouble. Make certain the throttle works freely before you start to ride again.

### **Wobble**

A “wobble” occurs when the front wheel and handlebars suddenly start to shake from side to side at any speed. Most wobbles can be traced to improper loading, unsuitable accessories, incorrect tire pressure, or misaligned tires and/or chain drive. If you are carrying a heavy load, lighten it. If you can’t, shift it. Center the weight lower and farther forward on the cycle. Make sure tire pressure, spring pre-load, air shocks, and dampers are at the settings recommended for that much weight. Make sure windshields and fairings are mounted properly.

Check for poorly adjusted steering; worn steering parts; a front wheel that is bent, misaligned, or out of balance; loose wheel bearings or spokes; and swingarm bearings. If none of these are determined to be the cause, have the motorcycle checked out thoroughly by a qualified professional.

Trying to “accelerate out of a wobble” will only make the cycle more unstable. Instead:

- Grip the handlegrips firmly, but don’t fight the wobble.
- Close the throttle gradually to slow the motorcycle. Do not apply the brakes; braking could make the wobble worse.
- Move your weight as far forward and down as possible.
- Pull off the road as soon as you can to fix the problem.

### **Chain Problems**

A chain that slips or breaks while you’re riding could lock the rear wheel and cause your cycle to skid. Chain slippage or breakage can be avoided by proper maintenance.

**Slippage** — If the chain slips when you try to speed up quickly or ride uphill, pull off the road. Check the chain and sprockets. Tightening the chain may help. If the problem is a worn or stretched chain or worn or bent sprockets, replace the chain, the sprockets, or both before riding again.

**Breakage** — You’ll notice an instant loss of power to the rear wheel. Close the throttle and brake to a stop.

### **Engine Seizure**

When the engine “locks” or “freezes” it is usually low on oil. The engine’s moving parts can’t move smoothly against each other, and the engine overheats. The first sign may be a loss of engine power or a change in the engine’s sound. Squeeze the clutch lever to disengage the engine from the rear wheel. Pull off the road and stop. Check the oil. If needed, oil should be added as soon as possible or the engine will seize. When this happens, the effect is the same as a locked rear wheel. Let the engine cool before restarting.

***There Is No Substitute For Frequent Cycle Maintenance.***

#### **10. If your motorcycle starts to wobble:**

- A. Accelerate out of the wobble.
- B. Use the brakes gradually.
- C. Grip the handlegrips firmly and close the throttle gradually.
- D. Downshift.

## **ANIMALS**

Naturally, you should do everything you safely can to avoid hitting an animal. If you are in traffic, however, remain in your lane. Hitting something small is less dangerous to you than hitting something big — like a car.

Motorcycles seem to attract dogs. If you are chased, shift down and approach the animal slowly. As you approach it, speed up and leave the animal behind. Don't kick at an animal. Keep control of your motorcycle, and look to where you want to go.

## **FLYING OBJECTS**

From time to time riders are struck by insects, cigarettes thrown from cars, or pebbles kicked up by the tires of the vehicle ahead. If you are wearing face protection, it might get smeared or cracked, making it difficult to see. Without face protection, an object could hit you in the eye, face, or mouth. Whatever happens, keep your eyes on the road and your hands on the handlebars. When safe, pull off the road and repair the damage.

## **GETTING OFF THE ROAD**

If you need to leave the road to check the motorcycle (or just to rest for a while), be sure you:

- **Check the Roadside** — Make sure the surface of the roadside is firm enough to ride on. If it is soft grass, loose sand, or if you're just not sure about it, slow way down before you turn onto it.
- **Signal** — Drivers behind might not expect you to slow down. Give a clear signal that you will be slowing down and changing direction. Check your mirror and make a head check before you take any action.
- **Pull Off the Road** — Get as far off the road as you can. It can be very hard to spot a motorcycle by the side of the road. You don't want someone else pulling off at the same place you are.
- **Park Carefully** — Loose and sloped shoulders make setting the kickstand difficult.

### **11. If you are chased by an animal:**

- A. Kick it away.
- B. Stop until the animal loses interest.
- C. Swerve around the animal.
- D. Approach the animal slowly, then speed up.

## **CARRYING PASSENGERS AND CARGO**

Only experienced riders should carry passengers or large loads. The extra weight changes the way the motorcycle handles, balances, turns, speeds up, and slows down. Before taking a passenger or heavy load on the street, practice away from traffic.

### **Equipment**

To carry passengers safely:

- Equip and adjust your motorcycle to carry passengers.
- Instruct the passenger before you start.
- Adjust your riding technique for the added weight.
- Have your passenger wear the same type of protective gear recommended for motorcycle operators.

The following equipment is required by Idaho law:

- **A Proper Seat** — large enough to hold both of you without crowding, or a separate, permanently attached passenger seat. You should not sit any farther forward than you usually do.
- **Footrests** — for the passenger. A firm footing prevents your passenger from falling off and pulling you off, too.
- **A Helmet** — any person under the age of eighteen (18) must wear a DOT-approved helmet while operating or riding on a motorcycle.

Adjust the suspension to handle the additional weight. Add a few pounds of pressure to the tires if you carry a passenger. (Check your owner's manual.) While your passenger sits on the seat with you, adjust the mirror and headlight according to the change in the motorcycle's angle.

### **Instructing Passengers**

Even if your passenger is a motorcycle rider, provide complete instructions before you start. Tell your passenger to:

- Sit as far forward as possible without crowding you.
- Hold firmly to your waist, hips, or belt.
- Keep both feet on the pegs, even when stopped.
- Keep legs away from the muffler(s).
- Stay directly behind you, over the center of the motorcycle.
- Avoid unnecessary motion.

Also, tell your passenger to tighten his or her hold when you (1) approach surface problems, (2) are about to start from a stop, and (3) warn that you are going to make a sudden move.

### **Riding With Passengers**

Your motorcycle will respond more slowly with a passenger on board. The heavier your passenger, the longer it will take to slow down, speed up, or turn — especially on a light cycle.

- Ride a little slower, especially when taking curves, corners, or bumps.
- Start slowing earlier as you approach a stop.
- Open up a larger cushion of space ahead and to the sides.
- Wait for larger gaps to cross, enter, or merge in traffic.

Warn your passenger of special conditions — when you will pull out, stop quickly, turn sharply, or ride over a bump. Turn your head slightly to make yourself understood, but keep your eyes on the road ahead.

### **Carrying Loads**

Most motorcycles are not designed to carry much cargo. Small loads can be carried safely if positioned and fastened properly.

- **Keep the Load Low** — Fasten loads to the seat, or put them in saddle bags. Piling loads against aissybar or frame on the back of the seat raises the cycle's center of gravity and disturbs its balance.
- **Keep the Load Forward** — Place the load over, or in front of, the rear axle. Tankbags keep loads forward, but use caution when loading hard or sharp objects. Mounting loads behind the rear axle can affect how the cycle turns and brakes. It can also cause a wobble.
- **Distribute the Load Evenly** — Load saddlebags with about the same weight. An uneven load can cause the motorcycle to drift to one side.
- **Secure the Load** — Fasten the load securely with elastic cords (bungee cords). A tight load won't catch in the wheel or chain, causing it to lock up and skid. Rope tends to stretch and knots come loose, permitting the load to shift or fall.
- **Check the Load** — Stop and check the load every so often to make sure it has not worked loose or moved.

#### **12. Passengers should:**

- A. Stay directly behind you over the center of the cycle.
- B. Always sit upright.
- C. Sit as far back as possible.
- D. Never hold onto you.

## GROUP RIDING

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If you ride with others, do it in a way that promotes safety and doesn't interfere with the flow of traffic.

### Keep the Group Small

Small groups make it easier and safer for car drivers who need to get around them. A small number isn't separated as easily by traffic or red lights. Riders won't always be hurrying to catch up. If your group is larger than four or five riders, divide it up into two or more smaller groups.

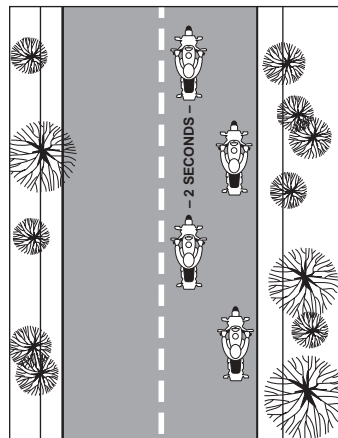
### Keep the Group Together

- **Plan** — The leader should look ahead for changes and signal early so “the word gets back” in plenty of time. Start lane changes early to permit everyone to complete the change.
- **Put Beginners Up Front** — Place inexperienced riders behind the leader, where more experienced riders can watch them.
- **Follow Those Behind** — Let the tailender set the pace. Use your mirrors to keep an eye on the person behind. If a rider falls behind, everyone should slow down a little to stay with the tailender.
- **Know the Route** — Make sure everyone knows the route. Then, if someone is separated they won't have to hurry to keep from getting lost or taking a wrong turn.

### Keep Your Distance

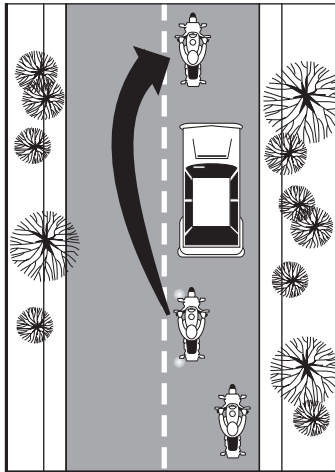
Maintain close ranks at a safe distance. A close group takes up less space on the highway, is easier to see and is less likely to be separated. However, it must be done properly.

- **Don't Pair Up** — Never operate directly alongside another rider. There is no place to go if you have to avoid a car or something on the road. To talk, wait until you are both stopped.
- **Staggered Formation** — This is the best way to keep ranks close yet maintain an adequate space cushion. The leader rides in the left side of the lane, while the second rider stays one second behind in the right side of the lane.

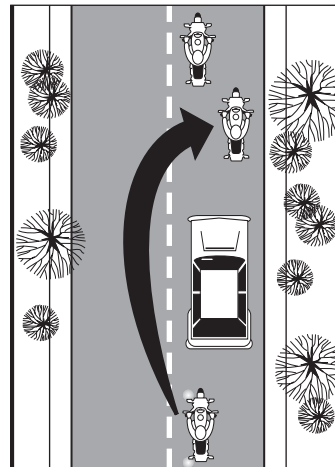


A third rider stays in the left position, two seconds behind the first rider. The fourth rider would keep a two-second distance behind the second rider. This formation keeps the group close and permits each rider a safe distance from others ahead, behind, and to the sides, and discourages traffic from breaking into the formation.

- **Passing in Formation** — Riders in a staggered formation should pass one at a time.



First, the lead rider should pull out and pass when it is safe. After passing, the leader should return to the left position and continue riding at passing speed to open room for the next rider.



When the first rider passes safely, the second rider should move up to the left position and watch for a safe chance to pass. After passing, this rider should return to the right position and open up room for the next rider.

Some people suggest that the leader should move to the right side after passing a vehicle. This is not a good idea. It encourages the second rider to pass and cut back in before there is a large enough space cushion in front of the passed vehicle. It's simpler and safer to wait until there is enough room ahead of the passed vehicle to allow each rider to move into the same position held before the pass.



- **Single-File Formation** — It is best to move into a single-file formation when riding curves or turning, and when entering or leaving a highway.

## **BEING IN SHAPE TO RIDE**

Riding a motorcycle is a demanding and complex task. Skilled riders pay attention to the riding environment and to operating the motorcycle, identifying potential hazards, making good judgments, and executing decisions quickly and skillfully. Your ability to perform and respond to changing road and traffic conditions is influenced by how fit and alert you are.

## **FATIGUE**

Riding a motorcycle is more tiring than driving a car. On a long trip, you'll tire sooner than you would in a car. Avoid riding when you are tired. Fatigue can affect your control of the cycle.

- **Protect Yourself From the Elements** — Wind, cold, and rain make you tire quickly. Dress warmly. A windshield is worth its cost if you plan to ride long distances.
- **Limit Your Distance** — Experienced riders seldom try to ride more than about six hours a day.
- **Take Frequent Rest Breaks** — Stop, and get off the cycle at least every two hours.
- **Don't Drink or Use Drugs** — Artificial stimulants often result in extreme fatigue or depression when they start to wear off, making it very difficult to concentrate on the task at hand.

**13. When riding in a group, inexperienced riders should position themselves:**

- A. Behind the leader.
- B. In front of the group.
- C. In the middle of the group.
- D. Beside the leader.

**14. To avoid fatigue, you should ride no more than:**

- A. 2 hours a day.
- B. 4 hours a day.
- C. 6 hours a day.
- D. 10 hours a day.

*Answers: 1-D, 2-D, 3-D, 4-A, 5-B, 6-C, 7-D, 8-D, 9-D, 10-C, 11-D, 12-A, 13-A, 14-C*

## PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Motorcycles are inexpensive to operate, fun to ride, and easy to park. Unfortunately, many riders never learn the critical skills needed to ride safely. Professional training for beginning and experienced riders prepares them for real-world traffic situations. Motorcycle Rider Courses teach and improve skills such as effective turning, braking maneuvers, protective apparel selection, obstacle avoidance, traffic strategies, and maintenance.

### THE TRAINING PROGRAM: *Think of it as a desk with two wheels!*

There are two levels to the *STAR* Program: one for beginners and another for more experienced riders. This way, students with similar skill levels learn together. Both courses are taught by Idaho and Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) certified instructors. These are highly-experienced riders with the patience, understanding, and knowledge to help you develop skills you can't learn from family members or friends. Both courses take place in controlled, off-street environments, so you don't have to worry about traffic.

### MOTORCYCLE RIDERCOURSE: *Riding and Street Skills (MRC:RSS)*

This is the beginner course, specially designed for novice riders. You'll spend about seven hours in the classroom and about eight hours riding a motorcycle. The course takes place over two-and-a-half days—evenings and weekends. You'll become familiar with different types of motorcycles, their controls, and how they operate. You'll learn the effects of drugs and alcohol, and you'll discover how to create your own strategies for riding in traffic and dealing with critical situations. You'll begin with straight-line riding, turning, shifting, and stopping, then advance to maximum cornering, swerving, and emergency-braking skills.

In the beginner course, helmets and motorcycles are provided. You are responsible for providing the required protective clothing (eye protection, gloves, boots that cover the ankle, sturdy pants, and a jacket).

### EXPERIENCED RIDERCOURSE: *(ERC)*

This second-level course is designed for riders with at least three-month's experience. Even if you've been riding for some time, there's always something new you can learn. This one-day course puts you through the paces. You'll spend a short time in the classroom fine-tuning the mental skills needed for survival in traffic. Then, using your own motorcycle, you'll practice techniques of managing traction, controlling rear-wheel skids, stopping quickly, proper cornering, and swerving. When you're finished, you'll have valuable new riding skills. . . some you may not have realized you were missing!

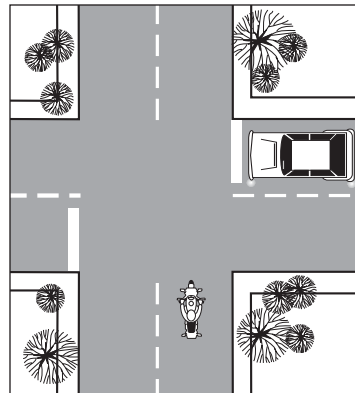
Rider courses are available throughout Idaho. For the location of the one nearest you, call the [Idaho Skills Training Advantage for Riders \(STAR\)](#) Program toll free at 1-888-280-STAR (7827) or the Idaho Department of Education at (208) 332-6852.

## **KNOWLEDGE TEST (Sample Questions)**

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*(The answers are printed at the bottom of the next page.)*

1. **It is MOST important to flash your brake light when:**
  - A. someone is following too closely.
  - B. you will be slowing suddenly.
  - C. there is a stop sign ahead.
  - D. your signals are not working.
2. **The FRONT brake supplies how much of the potential stopping power?**
  - A. About one-quarter.
  - B. About one-half.
  - C. About three-quarters.
  - D. All of the stopping power.
3. **To swerve correctly:**
  - A. shift your weight quickly.
  - B. turn the handlebars quickly.
  - C. press the handgrip in the direction of the turn.
  - D. press the handgrip in the opposite direction of the turn.
4. **If a tire goes flat while riding, it is usually best to:**
  - A. hold the handlegrips firmly and apply the brake on the good tire.
  - B. shift your weight toward the good wheel and brake.
  - C. brake on the good tire and steer to the right.
  - D. use both brakes and stop quickly.
5. **The car is waiting to enter the intersection. It is best to:**
  - A. make eye contact with the driver.
  - B. reduce speed and be ready to react.
  - C. maintain speed and position.
  - D. maintain speed and move right.



## **MOTORCYCLE SKILL TEST**

Basic vehicle control and obstacle-avoidance skills are included in skill tests to determine your ability to handle normal and hazardous traffic situations. For example, you may be tested for your ability to:

- Know your motorcycle and your riding limits.
- Accelerate, brake, and turn safely.
- See, be seen, and communicate with others.
- Adjust speed and position to the traffic situation.
- Stop, turn, and swerve quickly.
- Make critical decisions and carry them out.

Examiners may score on factors related to safety such as:

- Selecting safe speeds to perform maneuvers.
- Choosing the correct path and staying within boundaries.
- Completing normal and quick stops.
- Completing normal and quick turns, or swerves.

*Knowledge Test Answers: 1-B, 2-C, 3-C, 4-A, 5-B*



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